

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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R 301611Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2765

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

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DEPT PASS USDA/FAS

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAGR, NS

SUBJ: SURINAM RICE SITUATION

REF : PORT OF SPAIN TELEX 281813Z JUL 76 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IF WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE STABLE, SURINAM'S AUTUMN RICE CROP IS EXPECTED TO BE NORMAL, BUT HEAVEY RAINS DURING EXTENDED RAINY SEASON ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR 10-15 PER CENT DECLINE IN SPRING HARVEST. NEVERTHELESS, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE 1976 PRODUCTION WILL BE ADEQUATE TO MEET ALL DOMESTIC AND EXPORT REQUIREMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH COMPLETE FIGURES ARE NOT YET IN, SURINAM'S MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ESTIMATES A TEN TO FIFTEEN PER CENT DECLINE IN THE SPRING RICE HARVEST (FEBRUARY TO MAY CROP) BECAUSE OF HEAVY AND EXTENDED RAINS EXPERIENCED BY RICE GROWING REGION IN NORTHWESTERN SURINAM. NICKERIE

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DISTRICT, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 90 PER CENT OF

SURINAM'S PADDY PRODUCTION, WILL HAVE AN ESTIMATED SPRING PRODUCTION THIS YEAR OF 74,000 TO 89,000 TONS. NEARLY SIXTY PER CENT OF THIS TOTAL WAS PRODUCED ON LARGE FARMS, INCLUDING THE WORLD'S LARGEST MECHANIZED RICE FAR AT WAGENINGEN. SURINAM'S TOTAL 1975 RICE PRODUCTION IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE BEEN APPROXIMATELY 176,000 TONS.

3. REASONS FOR DECLINE IN PRODUCTION INCLUDE (A) HEAVY RAINS DURING THE BLOOMING PERIOD; (B) DIFFICULTIES IN HARVESTING DUE TO WETNESS OF THE SOIL AND CROP CONDITION; AND (C) WATER OVERBURDEN. FOR EXAMPLE, SURLAND (A BANANA EXPORTER) FAILED TO HARVEST ABOUT 600 TONS OF RICE ON LANDS RECENTLY CONVERTED FROM LOW-YIELDING BANANA FIELDS BECAUSE THEIR COMBINES COULD NOT OPERATE IN THE WET, MUDDY SOIL.

4. THE MECHANIZED RICE FARM AT WAGENINGEN (STICHTING MACHINALE LANDBOUW) REPORTS THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HARVEST THEIR ENTIRE SPRING CROP OF 30,000 TONS. THEY ESTIMATE A FALL HARVEST OF 35,000 (TOTAL PRODUCTION WAS ABOUT 70,000 TONS IN 1975).

5. ALTHOUGH WEATHER CONDITIONS REDUCED THE SPRING HARVEST BY REPORTED TEN TO FIFTEEN PER CENT, SITUATION WAS MITIGATED BY INCREASE OF 1000 HECTARES IN ACREAGE PLANTED SINCE 1973 AND BY USE OF HIGHER-YIELDING VARIETIES. AGRICULTURE MINISTRY OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE 1976 PRODUCTION WILL BE ADEQUATE TO MEET ALL LOCAL CONSUMPTION AND USE REQUIREMENTS (ESTIMATED AT

APPROXIMATELY 80,000 TONS FOR 1975) AND EXPORT NEEDS, WHICH TOTALED ESTIMATED 48,000 TONS IN 1974, THE LAST YEAR FOR WHICH RELIABLE FIGURES ARE AVAILABLE.
ZURHELLEN

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